

EVENING WORSHIP

***Call to Worship**

***Prayer of Invocation**

***Hymn of Praise** Psalm 2B

Psalms and Hymns

Scripture Reading Mark 9:1-13

Sermon “Understanding Jesus: Glory Unveiled as the Kingdom Comes in Power”

Pastor Joel Irvin

1) *The Promise of a Foretaste of Glory Divine* (v. 1)

2) *What the Disciples See & Hear at the Place Where Earth & Heaven Meet!* (vv. 2-8)

3) *Returning to Earth & Discovering ‘Normal’ Life in the New Age* (vv. 9-13)

Congregational Prayer

***Apostles’ Creed (p 851)**

***Hymn of Praise** PHSS 172 “O Wondrous Type, O Vision Fair”

***Benediction**

READ ISAIAH 63:15- 64:5

Tonight I want to declare unabashedly that we lack a proper vision of our God.

The reason we struggle & despair when trials come,
the reason we get anxious about the uncertainties going forward
is b/c we lack a proper vision of our God → which means we lack holy fear.

You see, our problem is not that we fear too much, but that we fear too little...
or perhaps better, we spend time fearing things that **are** far too little,
b/c we fail to fear the Almighty & Holy God who is far too much!

Psalm 102 promises that God will one day take & ball up this entire universe,
and toss it aside, like you and I would an old shirt, & throw it in the dirty clothes' hamper

Have you ever tried to envision that?

Do you realize that if God were to rend the heavens and come down right now,
the shock & awe of His presence would put all of your other life issues in perspective???
that everything that you worry & become anxious over
would be seen as **NOTHING** if Almighty God were to descend right now?

Cultivating a vision of God's unsurpassed glory is what we need to do more in our lives.

We ought to be able to contrast the worst things we can imagine on earth
→ w/ the power of our Holy God, & then ask ourselves, "What ought we to fear?"

& after rightly concluding that the Creator of the Universe is the only One we ought to fear,
remind ourselves of the gospel promise that this God who is worthy of all our fear,
→has **loved us** w/ an everlasting Love in sending Jesus
to take on the worst this life can dish out
so that we might take on the best heaven can dish out... eternal **Sonship!(PAUSE)**

So I ask you: What would it mean for you going forward as you face life's uncertainties,
if you tightly held in one hand a vision of the glory of your Almighty God,
& in the other His certain promise to never leave you or forsake you?

If you believed w/ all your heart that the Ruler of Creation was looking down @ you & thinking
"You are my child in whom I am well pleased!"

Beloved, let us pray that we will all walk out of here w/ higher thoughts of God,
that God will give us a vision of His glory & His gospel promise tonight

PRAY & READ MARK 9:1-13

Last week we reached a crisis point in Mark's Gospel.

Peter's eyes were finally opened to see Jesus' identity as the Christ,
but we found that He wasn't seeing Jesus too clearly as the Christ

For Peter, Jesus being the X meant the end of Peter's earthly worries...

The X was to bring in the KOG by dealing once and for all
w/ Rome, unclean Gentiles, problems like Israelite poverty...

But then Jesus exploded that by saying the X had to suffer, be rejected, and die...

And if that wasn't bad enough,
Peter then found out that being X's disciple made this a package deal!

For the first time in Mark's Gospel Jesus speaks of the cross in ch 8:34.

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself & take up his cross & follow me!"

Jesus says that if the X must suffer in this life, so must His disciples!

And they are hearing it will be in the worst imaginable way!

Now b/c we hear about the cross all the time, we need to pause & step into the disciples' shoes

This would have horrified them to hear that Jesus was planning to be crucified
and that the same was in store for them if they wanted to be disciples!

This far exceeds a simple call to die for a cause they believe in!

They could willingly take up swords against Rome for the cause of X, and likely die!
But this is a call to lay down swords, take up crosses so Rome can inflict maximum pain!
To go down Calvary road is not just the most shameful death,
but a death as slow & excruciating as Rome could deal out!

And though Jesus promises that what they will gain exceeds all they will lose,
you can imagine that the disciples w/ knees knocking, have to be thinking,
"What sort of glory could be worth that kind of death?"

And knowing His disciples' inward crisis, Jesus declares to them in v. 1

"Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

Now when Jesus says "Truly," He is giving a promise sprinkled w/ extra assurance.

In Greek, it is "Amnv." → from which we get AMEN! It will surely be!

Jesus is saying, "Listen up & stop focusing on all your worst fears!

Know for sure that Rome's worst is insignificant when compared w/ the coming KOG!

And to help you out, I have a few tickets for a sneak peek KOG showing!

Some of you won't taste that death before getting a foretaste of glory divine!

Jesus wants to rescue them from their fears w/ this promise of a vision of God's glory.

Jesus wants them to see that they are putting too much stock in this material world
b/c there is a greater invisible realm, that is soon to arrive in power

Friends, God is actively ruling over the entire cosmos w/ exception of this little antithesis
the KOG is far BIGGER than all we can imagine, beyond our time & space!
& Jesus is saying to those made in God's image, we should long for this Kingdom
Beloved, we are hardwired for something bigger than this age!

That is why I refuse to play small ball & preach "Woe to us Christians in 2019!"
Or offer you a little inspiration so you can hope for a better life here & now.
We come to worship asking Jesus to let us peek into this coming Glory Divine,
b/c this Kingdom is what we were made for!

We come here praying "Thy Kingdom Come...", for the fullness, but also...
"Please Lord, give me a little taste now so I will stop worrying about trivial things.
& let me leave here staggered knowing I am one week closer to the Glory I glimpsed!"

This is the point of coming here on Sundays!
The Church is not the Kingdom of God, but it is an outpost of Heaven!
We come here b/c this is the place where heaven and earth meet,
so that we can experience glory by being in the presence of God Almighty.

(PAUSE) Which is what we find in vv. 2-8 w/ the Transfiguration
the disciples' experience of what Jesus promised they would see in the 1st verse.
That's why Mark adds this rare time marker, "after six days" to indicate this
And the "some standing here" of v. 1 happen to be James, John, & Peter
His inner circle of His inner circle

& Jesus' heading up the mountain w/ 3 others echoes the Exodus 24 Mount Sinai experience,
the first corporate worship service we have in the Bible.
In Ex 24, Moses went up the mountain w/ Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, & 70 elders,
after which Moses went up alone for 6 days
before the glory of the LORD descended
Heaven came down to earth at Sinai, & this happens again in Mark 9 for the disciples to see

And this evidently was an experience that goes beyond what language can capture.
They watched Jesus be transfigured, radically changed, before their eyes,
and Mark uses a Greek word from which we get *metamorphosis*

They saw glory unlike anything they had ever seen.
This was not the reflected glory seen on Moses face.
They saw original glory as Christ was unveiled before their eyes.

Mark has placed special emphasis in his Gospel on the humanity of Jesus,
but not here, as we read of the indescribable deity of Jesus in all His transcendence,
so much so that it effects the fabric touching Him

Mark says that Jesus' garments become radiant, intensely white,
as no cloth refiner on earth was capable of making them...

And there is connection w/ the garments the glorious Son of Man in Daniel 7.
The disciples see the KOG coming in Power as Jesus' hidden glory is unveiled

And there appeared Elijah & Moses with Jesus,
two men of God who had each went up the mountain to meet w/ God
and here they are again meeting w/ God on the mountain...

Though they remain the same, while Jesus radiates the shekinah glory...

The greatest glory ever seen on earth, and then we witness the human response...

And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For **he did not know what to say**, for they were terrified.

Mark writes Peter starts talking, and after writes Peter did not know what to say!

And he adds, "for they were terrified!"

There are some people who get scared stiff & remain petrified

& there are others who in such an event just start babbling nonsense!

And a whole lot of nonsense starts coming out of Peter

But what is most shocking is that despite being overcome by the presence of the holy,
Peter is largely spiritually blind to what he is beholding!

6 days earlier Peter had his eyes opened to see that Jesus was the X,

when Jesus asked Peter if he also saw Him as simply one of the prophets

& here on the mount of transfiguration we see his spiritual blindness is not yet cured

Peter sees glorified Jesus standing w/ 2 of Israel's great prophets,

and He addresses Jesus like He is on par w/ them. "Rabbi!" (Teacher)

Jesus is standing there, His glory unveiled for all to see,

and we see Peter can't see that He can't see.

Though Peter does rightly see that this is as good as it gets here on our earth.

He blurts out, "Rabbi! This is it! This is why I followed you!"

Peter sees the mountaintop is the place where heaven & earth meet,

but he misses that the only reason the mountaintop **is that place** is b/c Jesus is there!

Jesus came in our flesh to be the place where heaven & earth meet!

Now we cannot be too hard on Peter b/c we do see the grace of God at work in His life.

A holy fear has rightly seized him as he experiences the Shekinah glory.

And he wants to build a tent like Moses did for God's glory as he understands it

And selfless Peter doesn't even request his own tent...

But Peter only has eyes for fading glories...

The earthly ministries of Elijah & Moses were meant to point forward to Jesus,
but Peter wants to exalt them to divine status by building tabernacles,
missing the point that in Jesus, God's presence had come to tabernacle w/ men

Oh Beloved, do you see what is happening here?

We're being shown our proclivity to **minimize** God's glory & offer worship to other things
how easily our hearts can be captured by lesser glories that belong to this age,
to devote our lives and time to things here & now as though we have arrived

We can come to church and find glory in the music, in the fellowship, in the preaching,
and miss out that all of these are vehicles to push us to worship Jesus,
and then to follow Him as we go out into the world!

That is Peter's second problem here... He doesn't want to ever leave the mountain

Peter says, "Rabbi, this is where it is! Let's stay!

We don't have to go to the valley & take up crosses when we have so much here!"

Do you see that **Satan** has climbed the mountain as well?

6 days earlier, he used Peter as a mouthpiece to hinder Jesus...

But this time there is no rebuke from Jesus!

Rather the glory cloud comes and overshadows them,

As God the Father rebukes Peter "*This is my Beloved Son; Listen to Him.*"

6 days ago there was the discovery that Jesus was the Christ,
and now there is the discovery that Jesus is the Son of God.

Mark told us of Jesus' dual identity back in chapter 1, v 1,

and it was confirmed 8 vv. later at Jesus' baptism,

when Jesus was anointed by the Spirit to be the Christ,

and the Father spoke from heaven and said,

You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

And after that we get 8 chapters of evidence of Jesus' dual identity,

Jesus triumphing over demons, disease, and even death... and nobody can figure it out.

And here on the mountain Jesus' deity is unveiled for the 3 disciples to see,
and though they see, they remain spiritually blind!

Do you see why faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God?

I talk regularly w/ folks who want to see God's glory by means of signs on earth.

They want signs & wonders so that revival will happen...

And I don't have a problem w/ signs & wonders, but **they don't** give us eyes to see Jesus!

The Israelites in the days of Moses and Elijah got signs & wonders in spades,
they saw God's power & glory... but they were unfaithful,
still only had eyes for earthly glories, and failed to trust God when trials came...

If it is true that earthly visions of God's glory don't really help,
then how can we cultivate a proper vision of God's glory that can?

“Listen to Him! Listen to the Beloved Son!”

We cultivate a vision by listening to Jesus so we can receive eyes to see His glory.
When you are listening to Pastor Peter, or Pastor Joel preach,
you are to be looking to discover Christ's glory & that alone!

The guy behind the pulpit is there just to fade away like Elijah & Moses so only Jesus remains
speaking Jesus' words so disciples can take in the promise of what His coming means.
You put on your **listening** ears during the sermon in order to **see** Jesus in His glory

This scene says listening to Jesus is what heals spiritual blindness,
even though ironically Jesus never speaks once here...

b/c though this scene is meant to encourage disciples who fear the cross,
it is 1st meant to encourage Jesus b/c He is 1st in line to take up the cross
Jesus came to be encouraged by Elijah, by Moses, & by His Father
(b/c Jesus was just as human as us & even more so)

Jesus is entirely passive in this mountain scene as He is loved on...

b/c ahead lies another mount where He must again be passive as He is hated on
This private mountain scene anticipates the public spectacle of another Mountain

Where instead of being surrounded by 2 prophets, Jesus will be surrounded by 2 thieves,
and instead of glistening garments, Jesus will be stripped naked.

Instead of these 3 disciples, 3 women will look on,
and instead of the Father declaring Him to be the Son of God,
it will come from the lips of a Roman executioner.

Beloved there is a coming glory at Calvary that cannot be seen w/o eyes of faith,
and Jesus in the flesh needed to hear these words of encouragement
before He spread out His arms on the hard wood of the cross...
and became forsaken as the Father turned His face away from His Beloved
being dispossessed that we sinners might become God's possession

Do you hear the love of God that is seen at Calvary?

Jesus came to take the absolute worst this life can throw at us by bleeding on the cross,
so that you might hear & believe Calvary's cry,
and be raised up to new life as God's Beloved children in glory!

I hope you see the parallels btw the mountains,
and there is one more as you may recall that question about Elijah at the cross
and there is one here that arises as Jesus walks down the mountain w/ the disciples.

⁹And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead might mean.¹¹And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?"¹²And he said to them, "Elijah does come first to restore all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him."

Peter had wanted to stay on the mountain with Elijah instead of facing the prospect of the cross
Remember that Elijah had never died but was taken right up to heaven...
That sounded good to Peter.

Remember that after Elijah was taken up 50 sons of the prophets ignored Elisha,
and went out looking for him thinking God had cast Elijah upon some mountain.
And Peter thought he had found the glory those 50 had longed to see.

But Jesus wanted Peter to see that He had a **better glory** for his disciples,
so He brings them back down to earth and on the way tells them to keep this silent
until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Now we can understand why Jesus tells them to keep quiet b/c they don't really get it yet,
but we need to understand why this leaves them puzzled about the resurrection.

This is the 2nd time Jesus has spoken of the resurrection, and it is His resurrection only.
And that is what is confusing!
For those like the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection of the dead,
it was to happen at the end of history.

But Jesus is saying that He alone will rise from the dead & normal life would continue on,
a period during which they are to tell people about Jesus.

Instead of a general resurrection at the end of history for all, only Jesus will be raised,
and life will go on even though the age to come has arrived in Jesus...

Do you get their confusion?

So they ask Jesus about Elijah who they just saw on the mountain.

The scribes taught from texts like Malachi 4 and apocryphal texts like Ben Sira
that Elijah was to come before the day of the Lord.

⁵“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Elijah’s appearance indicated that the end of history was near... The resurrection of ALL...
But Jesus is saying *only He* will be raised & life will go on.
This is a very different timetable!

And Jesus confirms that the scribes are right! *Elijah does come first to restore all things!*
And you would think after saying that He would go onto v. 13
where He continues saying what they need to understand about Elijah

But after talking about Elijah coming 1st, Jesus relates that to the Son of Man’s suffering.
Now stay w/ me here...
Jesus is bringing together the victorious heavenly Son of Man from Daniel 7,
with the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53

Jesus had just made Peter’s head explode 6 days ago when He said He was the Christ,
but the long-awaited Christ would win the victory by suffering and death.
And Jesus is reiterating this again here.
Power & Glory come by means of Weakness & Humility
But what does this have to do w/ Elijah coming 1st?

Jesus is saying that they were blind to Elijah’s coming
& how he had paved the way for the suffering Christ.

They were looking for Elijah on the mountain who had gone straight to heaven,
An Elijah coming in power to usher in the end of the world
& they forgot Elijah who had suffered under the reign of a weak king
and his evil wife, Ahab and Jezebel.

If they had been looking for a suffering Elijah,
they would have seen that he had already come in John the Baptist,
who 3 chapters ago suffered & was beheaded by a weak king & his evil wife.

And this last OT prophet, by his suffering, was preparing the way for the Christ,
The Christ upon whom the end of the world fell there at the cross,
but by whose resurrection ushered in the beginning of a new world
for all who would believe in Him

Elijah appeared on the mountain not to draw attention to himself,
but to testify w/ Moses that the new eschatological age had come in the Person of Jesus.
James, John, and Peter were getting a first lesson in biblical hermeneutics,
discovering that all the Law & the Prophets pointed to Jesus.

These 3 disciples were brought up to the mountain to see the KOG coming in power,
They had a mountain top experience where they tasted the glory to come...
I'll confess there is a part of me that wishes I had been there...
and there is a part of me that is glad that I was not

Peter makes it clear that he did not ever want to come back to earth,
He didn't want to descend down into the valley where life is hard...
I'm pretty sure part of me would have wanted to pitch a tent or two...

Perhaps you have tasted something like mountaintop glory in your life...
A time when you felt God's presence in such a way you felt like you were in the clouds.
More than once when we have been singing our hearts out here,
I have started to feel like I should expect my ears should start popping...
as though somehow flat Indiana was increasing in elevation...

At those moments, I wish that it would not have to end,
and we wouldn't have to leave here and descend into Monday morning
& all the challenges & struggles that follow.

But I rest on the fact that God gives us exactly what we need for what we have to face...
James was to end up becoming the 1st Apostle who was martyred

And we know that both John and Peter were to suffer greatly as they followed their Lord
And both would look back on this mountaintop experience and find encouragement,
and instruct us to be encouraged by what they saw

John would write, "and the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we have seen his
glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Peter would write in his 2nd epistle, *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made
known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses to his
majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne
to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we
ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy
mountain.*" And Peter then adds, *"And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to
which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in the dark place until the day dawns
and the morning star rises in your hearts..."*

Peter testifies to the moment when He saw Christ transfigured,
and then he tells us that we need to listen to the Word testifying to Christ,
so that we might be able to see as we enter into the valley

He is calling us to listen to God's truth, and let it shine in our hearts & in our world

That trip down the mountain was more than just a lesson in how to understand the OT,
it helped him to see that we don't get to go straight to "Glory 909"
w/o first passing "Suffering 101"

The reason why is that in Christ the Father now has more than one Beloved Child.
And if the Father began in this manner with His only Begotten,
then we should expect that He will pursue this manner w/ all His children...

If you believe in Jesus and are following Him into the valley,
this is the work of the Spirit in Christ who is bearing witness *that we are children of God,
and if children, then heirs- heirs of God & fellow heirs w/ Christ, provided we
suffer with him in order that we might also be glorified with Him.* (Romans 8:17)

I encourage you when you find yourself descending into the valley,
to wrestle with the question of the resurrection of the Christ & why He came,
that you might get front and center a vision of your Almighty God,
and set beside that the gospel promise that you are deeply loved,
and God is so pleased with you!

And may we live in such a way that it tells the world we have this vision of X's glory,
that it makes clear that all other glory in this world is completely lacking!
Amen?